'THE FRACTURED IMAGINARY': POPULAR THINKING ON MILITARY MATTERS IN FIFTH CENTURY ATHENS[1]

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The concept of 'the Athenian imaginary' was introduced to anglophone historians in a difficult, dense, but path-breaking study *The Invention of Athens* by Nicole Loraux.[2] Under this term are grouped a particular characterisation of Athenians and their relations with others, the military image of the citizen, his obligations to the city, and the nature of his ancestral origin and constitution. This material Loraux isolates in the funeral orations of classical Athens. She argues that the funeral speech shared a function with the concept of ideology developed by Marx in the *The German Ideology* for the analysis of a developing bourgeois culture.[3] Both obscured 'the internal divisions of a society' and the realities of power, for the funeral speech denies the diversity of citizen fighters, the rule of the *demos* and the true relationship with the allies.[4] Yet Loraux does not employ the term 'ideology' as it is 'linked with other, vaguer or oversimple, notions - duplicity, mystification, cosmetics, the mask, [and] illusion'.[5] The thought of the

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1 This article is a revised and in part expanded version of a paper that was first delivered at the 'Narrating Antiquity' seminar in honour of Professors Deborah Boedeker and Kurt Raaflaub at the University of New England in July 1996, and presented again at a staff-student seminar of the Department of Classics at the University of Newcastle in April 1997. I would like to thank Drs. Minor Markle and Tom Hillard for making it possible for me to deliver this paper at the earlier seminar, and Professor Harold Tarrant for the invitation to speak to members of his department. All translations of classical Greek in this article, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

Readers should be aware that this article presents ideas which I held at an earlier stage in my research and which are far less developed and detailed than they are today. Indicative of this is that the final form of my consideration of the general issues of this article constitutes the body of my forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation (Macquarie University 1999). In consequence, although the lineaments of most of the findings on the popular thinking on military matters in fifth century Athens to be found in my thesis are certainly apparent in this article, the interested reader should seek out my work for nuances of argumentation and further evidence and ideas.

2 Her book is so described by Sage (1989) 68, Anderson (1988) 260 and Morris (1994) 72.

3 Loraux (1986a) 198, 330-331.

4 Loraux stresses that the funeral oration often substitutes a satisfying imagined picture of the Athenians and their relationships with others for a more sober presentation of facts (*ibid.*, 69, 83, 97, 265-266, 328). Goldhill ((1986a) 64) also argues that 'civic ideology' worked to assimilate differences and contradictions and was at times 'far from the actual social circumstances'.

5 Loraux (1986a) 335-336.

funeral oration was not developed, as Marx would have it, by a 'dominant class' intent on hiding the basis of its power. Loraux also refuses to engage in the task of the correction of deceits implied in the classification of this material as 'illusion'. An 'institutional illusion', she argues, 'is still a fact' and can be explored in its own right. Therefore, plundering the psychoanalytic terminology of Jacques Lacan, she designates 'under the term 'imaginary' all the figures in which a society apprehends its identity'.[6] Later work sees Loraux class other thought as constitutive of the Athenian imaginary and other genres as sources for this civic discourse. In *The Children of Athena* this includes stories about autochthony and the place of women, treated differently in comedy, tragedy and the funeral oration;[7] and in an article from *City-States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy* images of a divided and united city apparent in tragedy and history.[8] Loraux, however, does not give a definitive account of the Athenian imaginary. Citizens were not only contrasted with women, but also, as Hall, Cartledge and Hartog show, with imagined barbarians who acted in ways considered objectionable in Athenian society and who possessed negative correlatives of Athenian behavioural ideals.[9] Identity, furthermore, was also formed by thought not concerned with the character and origins of the Athenians. A citizen gained elements of a sense of self from the interconnected ideas, outlined by Adkins, den Boer, Dover and Ober, about the social differences between elite and non-elite citizens, the advantages and disadvantages of poverty and wealth, the value of labour, and the role of ordinary citizens in a democracy.[10]

This paper presents in a cursory fashion findings to emerge from my research on the military elements of the imaginary of fifth century Athens.[11] This

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6 Loraux (1986a) 336-337. Loraux takes over the concept of 'the imaginary' from French historiography (469 n.42) that it in turn appropriated it from the psychoanalytic theory of Lacan (translator's note at .(328) and West [1988] 396). Lacan's *imaginary* was a fictive but necessary element of a subject's sense of self.

7 Loraux (1993). *The Invention of Athens* and *The Children of Athena* were both published in French in 1981, but the former emerged from a *doctorat d'Etat* completed in 1976 (Loraux [1986a] vii). Loraux (1995) continues an interest in sexual differentiation in Greek thought.

8 Loraux (1991). Loraux (1986b) argues that the idealised image of the united and homogeneous city developed by the Athenians has been erroneously accepted as fact by French classicists.

9 Goldhill (1986a) 56, 59-60; Hartog (1988); Cartledge (1993). The most detailed treatments of the creation of the barbarian as 'other' are Hall (1989); (1993).

10 Adkins (1960), (1972); den Boer (1979) 151-204; Dover (1974) ; Ober (1989).

11 My earliest reflections on this topic are found in Pritchard (1998a). My thinking has undergone several major transformations since this piece was first delivered as a paper at the 'Ancient History in a Modern University' conference at Macquarie University in July 1993.

study has concentrated mainly on how different types of citizen fighters were employed and evaluated in Athenian popular thinking, and on explanations for the particular organisation of this martial material. Yet before giving a brief sketch of my developing ideas, it is necessary to outline basic characteristics of the imaginary and its primary sources.

The Character and Primary Sources of the Imaginary

The Athenian imaginary was formed and manipulated, not in the private works of historians and philosophers, but in public speech at the assembly, council, law courts, theatre and the public funeral ceremony. Although public speakers and playwrights were members of the Athenian upper class, the imaginary was not a reflection of elitist prejudices and points of view. For in spite of different contexts of delivery, politicians, litigants and comic and tragic poets alike faced adjudication by massed audiences, and therefore, were compelled to tailor their orations and plays to the expectations, values and sensibilities of the Athenian populace.[12] This popular thought was shared, in the main, by all citizens. There is no evidence that the Athenian lower class developed values opposed to those expressed in public speech, and only a minority of the Athenian elite ever withdrew from politics and harboured anti-democratic sentiments.[13] In contrast to the myriads of speeches surviving from fourth century Athens, the city of the preceding century bequeathed to posterity a relatively small parcel of forensic and deliberative oratory.[14] Consequently, the extant plays of Aiskhylos, Euripides, Sophokles and Aristophanes form the largest class of literary evidence for the imaginary of fifth century Athens.

The employment of Aristophanes as an informant for popular thought has been challenged by an influential appendix written by Geoffrey de Ste. Croix that, in spite of a recent critique, continues to garner support and newly coined arguments in its defence.[15] De Ste. Croix maintains that Aristophanes

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12 For the elite status of speakers and dramatists, Thomas (1989) 199; Ober (1989) 104-126; Henderson (1990) 278. For the concept of mass-elite texts, Ober (1978) 119, 129-130; (1989) 43.

13 On the lack of a distinct thetic ideology, Adkins (1972) 119-120; Dover (1974) 39-40; Finley (1983) 124-126; Forrest (1966) 21-36; Jones (1957) 35-37; Loraux (1986a) 217-219; Meier (1990) 145; Ober (1989) 39; Rosivach (1991) 189; and Sinclair (1988) 208.

14 For catalogues of extant oratory and the dates of the orations, Ehrenberg (1943) 374-377 and Ober (1989) 341-349.

15 This is appendix XXIX of de Ste. Croix (1972). Many scholars cite this appendix with approval and/or pose further arguments to support it (e.g. Arnott (1991); Cartledge (1990) 46, 55; Donlan (1980) 173 (but note the contradiction at 162); Loraux (1986a) 458 n.205; Konstan (1985) 44; Markle (1985) 267; Sommerstein (1984) 314; and Storey (1992) 6). De

had a reactionary, upper class outlook on politics and foreign policy, and used his plays to win the audience over to his conservative points of view.[16] Importantly, if the plays of Aristophanes are replete with the prejudices of a disgruntled member of the elite, as de Ste. Croix proposes, this author cannot strictly be utilised as a source for Athenian popular thinking. Fortunately, this interpretation of Aristophanes has a fundamental flaw, as de Ste. Croix fails to realise that comedians were not free to do or say in their plays whatever they liked, but were tightly constrained by the specific demands of theatrical production and performance at Athens.

Athenian plays were performed in theatrical competitions staged in the theatre of Dionysos.[17] The renovated version of this auditorium of the late fourth century is estimated to have held between fourteen and seventeen thousand spectators, and the theatre of the previous century seems to have similarly capacious (Plato *Symposion* 175e).[18] Even at the performances of the Great Dionysia, where allies were present, most of the audience were Athenian citizens, and the introduction of a theoric payment by Perikles ensured that the majority of these Attic spectators were of a non-elite background.[19] Plato and Demosthenes claim that theatregoers vented their disapproval of a tragedy or comedy by hissing, shouting and demonstrably refusing to listen, and their appreciation with applause and acclamations (Plato *Republic* 492a; *Laws* 659a; Demosthenes 21.226). Moreover, such responses appear even to have been triggered by lines which strongly confirmed or disordered the 'moral and political sentiments' of the audience.[20] Crucially, although the determination of the winning playwright in tragic and comic competitions was formally in the hands of ten judges, a variety of classical sources make clear that the decisions of these officials were in practice determined by the audience responses to each piece (Aristophanes *Birds* 444-445; *Frogs* 778-779; [Andokides] 4.20-21). Therefore, with the outcome of the competition resting in the main on the way in which plays were received by the crowd, poets aiming for victory, like

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Ste. Croix's reading of Aristophanes dominated the academy of the 1970's when Marxism still reigned supreme (Storey (1992) 2 and (1987)). Heath (1987) is largely directed against this appendix.

16 De Ste. Croix (1972) 355, 363, 366-367, 370-371.

17 For the festivals of Dionysos to which these competitions were attached, Pickard-Cambridge (1968^2) 25-101 and MacDowell (1995) 7-11.

18 For differing estimates of the capacity of the Lykourgan theatre, Pickard-Cambridge (1968^2) 263; Wycherley (1978) 210.

19 On the small number of allies and their minimial impact on the content of plays, MacDowell (1995) 16 *pace* Hall (1989) 162-164. For the theoric payment, MacDowell (1995) 13-14 with refs..

20 Quotation from Pickard-Cambridge (1968)^2 275. Anecdotes about the audience's reaction to specific lines are mainly recorded in post-classical sources (274 nn.7-11).

Aristophanes (e.g. *Wasps* 1043-1050), could not afford to alienate ordinary citizens with jokes and ideas that would appeal only to the upper class, but rather, as Aristotle and Plato appreciated, they were compelled to work with the values, sensibilities and expectations of ordinary citizens (Plato *Laws* 700c-701b; Aristotle *Politics* 1341b15-19; *Poetics* 1453a34ff).[21] Indeed, the immediate success of Aristophanes upon entering theatrical competition along with the fact that he was consistently granted a chorus by the city throughout his long career strongly suggests that this poet did not fail to tailor his creations to the sensibilities and tastes of the majority.[22]

The consistency of content and frequency of delivery made the *epitaphios* or funeral oration the most important vehicle for the articulation and reinforcement of the imaginary in classical Athens.[23] These speeches presented a consistent view of the Athenians and their history: the citizens of Athens were superior to the other Greeks, excelled in martial *arete*, defeated the violent and unjust, fought alone for justice, protected Hellenic customs and the vulnerable, and were always victorious. When military and civic catastrophes occurred, the *epitaphioi* either quietly forgot them or distorted them beyond recognition so as not to disrupt this alluring idealisation of the Athenians. The crucial role of this genre in the presentation of the imaginary explains why it must be included in any discussion of fifth century civic thought, despite the fact that it is so poorly documented for this early period. We possess only one extant oration from this century recorded by the historian Thoukydides, who is not famed for his accurate reporting of the words of others (2.35-46), hints, passed down by Aristotle and Plutarch, of another *epitaphios* delivered by Perikles in 440 (*Rhetoric* 1.7.34, 3.10.7, 3.4.3; and *Perikles* 28.4-6), and a fragment of a funeral speech by Gorgias.[24] Moreover, the extant speech attributed to Perikles is probably not entirely indicative of the epitaphic tradition of the fifth century since contemporary references to the mythic exploits of the Athenians in tragedy and public art, and an explicit omission of historic military ventures in the Periklean speech itself (Thoukydides 2.36.2-4) strongly suggest that fifth century *epitaphioi* like those of the early fourth century (Lysias 2.4-70 and Plato *Menexenos* 237b-346a) presented a long list of historic and mythic Athenian military ventures. Although the elite speakers of the *epitaphios* were not trying to persuade the *demos* to accept their proposals over others like politicians or litigants, and were not constrained by the context of performance like playwrights, they undoubtedly gave orations consonant with popular

21 This point is well made by Carey (1994) 76-77.
22 For the victories and productions of Aristophanes, Dover (1993) 1-2 with references.
23 I discuss this genre at greater length and with full documentation in Pritchard (1996).
24 Translated by Sprague (1972) 48-49.

sentiments and expectations. After all, the speaker was selected by the popular institution the *boule* (Plato *Menexenos* 234b, 235c; Thoukydides 2.34.6); was the foremost political leader of the day; spoke to a mass audience (2.34.4, 8); and was required to give 'fitting' praise that met the expectations of those assembled at the public burial ground in the Kerameikos (2.34.6-7, 35.2, 36.1, 4, 46.1; Demosthenes 60.1).

Most contemporary students of tragedy, following the insights of Jean-Pierre Vernant, argue that this genre did not affirm the values of the imaginary, but typically problematised the audience's assimilation of these ideals by questioning their validity and showing them in conflict with each other.[25] While plays like *Antigone* or *Philoktetes* provide clear examples of this problematisation of popular thought, the fact that other tragedies actually had a broad range of positive and productive connexions with the city's imaginary[26] has been largely overlooked by modern scholarship. For example, works like Euripides' *The Suppliant Women*, *Herakleidai*, and *Erekhtheus* dramatised mythic exploits dear to the orations of the Kerameikos, and other tragedies like his *Ion* and Sophokles' *Oidipous at Kolonos* invented and dramatised new myths in support of the flattering characterisation of the Athenians more often broadcast by the funeral speeches.[27] Individual plays also furnished supportive aetiologies for controversial political and military developments (e.g. Aiskhylos' *Eumenides*), and even coined propaganda against traditional enemies like Thebes and Sparta (e.g. Sophokles' *Antigone* and Euripides' *Andromakhe*). Importantly, this genre, as illustrated in Aiskhylos' *The Suppliant Women* was the prime mover in the development both of the contrast between the Greek and barbarian and the detailed defence of democracy. Finally, tragedians also appear to have been instrumental in the elaboration of some commonplaces of the epitaphic tradition before this funerary genre even existed (e.g. Aiskhylos' *The Persians*). Tragedy appears then to have had profound and varied relations with civic thought. And the extent of these connexions and the fact that tragedians faced the same performance constraints as comedians mean that we are justified in utilising this genre as a primary source for the Athenian imaginary.

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25 e.g. Croally (1994) 2-3, 40, 43; Goldhill (1986a) 57, 60, 69, 74-75, 77; (1990) 114-115; (1991) 274; Raaflaub (1989) 49; (1994) 121; Segal (1986); and Zeitlin (1990) 132, 145, 148. Vernant (1988a); (1988b).

26 I first made this point in passing in Pritchard (1993) 8.

27 It is reassuring that my observations on this positive relationship between the tragic and epitaphic genres happen to be consonant with some of the conclusions of an excellent new work about tragedy's portrayal of Theseus by Sophie Mills (1997).

While these three types of literature had different styles, tones, and preoccupations, and could even treat similar topics like democracy in contradictory ways, this study seeks to negotiate the particularities of each type of source to expose the underlying values, patterns, and tendencies that are common to all three genres concerning martial representations and affairs in fifth century Athens. Nonetheless, we should not expect that this shared military material is itself contradiction free. It is very important to appreciate that the imaginary was not a logical construction, but rather a haphazard cultural melange within which patently incompatible ideas could subsist side by side. This characteristic of the popular thought of classical Athenians has been clearly demonstrated by studies of their seemingly incongruous ideas about poverty, leadership and wealth by Josiah Ober and others. In this article it will be argued that popular thinking on military matters in fifth century is another example of such contradiction and fracture in the Athenian imaginary.

Hoplites

Notwithstanding the manifest naval power of Athens, recognised even by the usually inept Pseudo-Xenophon (1.2), and contrary to the view of fourth century philosophers and most modern historians that *thetes* dominated the politics of fifth century Athens, it was the hoplite that was the central term in the imaginary's treatment of warfare, the military performance of citizenship, and the warrior's relation to other societal groups and peoples beyond the Greek world.[28] This normative status of the heavily armed infantry is most clearly apparent in the way popular thought, while careful not to deny the existence of other types of fighters, habitually employed a hoplitic frame of reference in generalised discussions of war. The comedy *Peace* by Aristophanes furnishes us with a detailed example of this tendency. This comic celebration of the impending end of the Archidamian War, notwithstanding the play's allusions to the naval campaigns of Phormio (347-348), the city's domination of the Aegean (503-507), and the existence of Athenian lightly armed troops (551-555), presents relief from military activity overwhelmingly by focussing on the hoplite.[29] Firstly, expressions of war weariness in this production draw exclusively on the experiences of Athenian heavy infantry men. The chorus are fed up with having to go along to the land army's muster ground of the Lykeion 'with spear, with shield' (354-356), and complain of the 'god-detested' taxiarch for rigging the call-up

28 For differing assessments of the veracity of these fourth century sources, Ceccarelli (1993) 455-460; Pritchard (1994) 119-123.

29 The first two of these references from *Peace* must be read with Sommerstein (1985) 149, 156 and Wheeler (1991) 141 with references.

of the hoplite from his own tribe (1172-1186).[30] Secondly, happiness at escape from military service is expressed with reference to the equipment and unpleasant realities of hoplite service: the chorus rejoice at having escaped their shield (335-336), helmets and the uninspiring rations of cheese and onions hoplites were ordered to bring for a campaign (1127-1129).[31] Finally, Aristophanes celebrates the ending of hostilities by dramatising in a final scene the adverse impact of peace, not on the builders of triremes or manufacturers of bows and arrows, but specifically on the retailers and makers of hoplitic arms (1208-1264). A seller of weapons enters and explains to Trygaios that his livelihood and those of the helmet-maker and spear-maker have been destroyed by peace (1209-1213, 1255). Further, the items proffered for sale by this market trader, and converted to domestic usage by Trygaios, all belong to the kit of the heavy foot soldier - crests (1214-1217), a cuirass (1224-1263), a trumpet (1240-1241) and spears (1260-1263).[32]

The Athenian imaginary did not employ the figure of the hoplite simply for generalised discussion of warfare, but also to express the duty of every citizen to fight for the city and the motherland. This further ideological utilisation of the hoplite is apparent in two passages from tragedy. In a play by Aiskhylos staged in 467 the king of Thebes, Eteokles, faced with the impending assault of an Argive army, reminds the citizens of their solemn duty to defend the city, the shrines of the gods, their children and the motherland (*Seven Against Thebes* 10-20).[33] In this exhortation he dwells longest on why the motherland must be protected (17-20; cf. 415-416): '...she reared you, young toddlers on her kindly surface, taking up all the toil of your upbringing, as shield bearing inhabitants (*aspidephorous*), in order that you shall be true in this duty.' Importantly, *aspidephoros* is a synonym used by tragedians for *hoplites* (e.g. Euripides *Phoinician Women* 1095-1096), and its employment brings Eteokles' evocation of martial duty into the realm of the heavily armed soldier. The new ruler of Thebes, Kreon, in a tragedy by Sophokles from 442 turns specifically to the clash of phalanxes when he reflects that a man in control of his household also meets his civic duties (*Antigone* 660-671): '...he who is a good man in the home would be clearly just in the city as well. I could believe confidently that such a person would rule and be ruled well, and when stationed in the storm of the spear would remain a true and brave comrade in arms (*parastates*).' There are two aspects of Kreon's words here that indicate the utilisation of a uniquely hoplitic

30 On the Lykeion as the land army's muster ground, Jameson (1980).

31 Athenian hoplites had to bring three days' rations when departing for an expedition (see, for example, Aristophanes *Akharnians* 197, 1097; *Peace* 312, 1182; *Wasps* 243).

32 The trumpet was a means of signalling the initial advance and other commands in hoplite battles (Thoukydides 6.69.1; Cawkwell (1989) 381; Lazenby (1991) 90).

33 For the date of this play, Winnington-Ingram (1985) 283.

frame of reference. Firstly, as hoplites typically fought in the rank and file formation of a phalanx, it is telling that the term *parastates* refers to a soldier standing next to another in a rank. Secondly, the spear, which is mentioned in this speech, was the weapon *par excellence* of the heavily armed soldier.[34] The exclusive focus on the hoplite in these tragic passages might be explained away simply as the effort on the part of the poets to make their discussions of martial duty agree with the notable role of the heavily armed soldier in their own descriptions of the battle around Thebes (Sophokles *Antigone* 100-150). This explanation, however, does not clarify the selection of the heavy infantryman for discussion of civic obligations, since the battle descriptions of these tragedies give prominence to other types of fighters as well. Why was it not a horseman or an archer who was used in these discussions of martial duty? Moreover, other sources for the Athenian imaginary happen to articulate the citizen's duty to fight for the city in similarly hoplitic terms. Hence, tragedy's own reference to the hoplite in discussions of martial duty is due not to to the descriptive detail of the plays themselves, but rather is a clear manifestation of an entrenched conceptual habit of fifth century Athenians.

Public ceremony in classical Athens was a potent medium for the expression and reinforcement of elements of the imaginary, and one such civic ritual was the parade of orphans at the festival of the Great or City Dionysia that touchingly reminded the citizen spectators of their duty to fight and even fall in battle for the city.[35] One of the honours granted citizens who had died in battle was state support of their families, and during the fifth century (Aristophanes *Peace* 1361; Isokrates 8.82) the assistance paid specifically to the sons of the war-dead culminated at their majority when they were paraded in the orchestra of the theatre of Dionysos, each fitted out in full hoplite armour donated to everyone of them by the *demos* (Plato *Menexenos* 249a-b).[36] Aiskhines gives a detailed and stereotypically nostalgic description of this public ceremony many decades after its disappearance from the Great Dionysia (3.154):

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34 For the *doru* or spear as the chief offensive weapon of the hoplite, Anderson (1991) 16-24; Cawkwell (1989) 385; Hanson (1989) 83-88; Lazenby (1991) 96.

35 For rituals and civic ideology, Goldhill (1990) 104; Henderson (1990) 287; Loraux (1986a) 145; Schmitt-Pantel (1990) 199; Strauss (1985) 76. I have found the following discussions of this parade useful: Goldhill (1986a) 76-77; (1990) 105-114.

36 On the city's assistance to families of the fallen, Thoukydides 2.35.1, 46.1-2; Lysias 2.75-76; Plato *Menexenos* 248a-249c; Demosthenes 60.32-33; Hypereides *Funeral Speech* 43. This support is superbly discussed by Loraux (1986a) 26-27 with secondary references. Aristophanes *Peace* 1361 should be read with Sommerstein (1987) 289. *Pace* Raaflaub ((1994) 140-141; (1996) 157) arguments set out in my forthcoming thesis puts beyond doubt that the sons of thetic casualties were included in this parade.

> ...once on this day, when as now the tragedians were about to be performed, in a time when the city had better customs and followed better leaders, the herald would come forward and place before you the orphans whose fathers had died in battle, young men equipped in the panoply of the hoplite; and he would utter that proclamation so honourable and such an incentive to valour: 'These young men, whose fathers showed themselves brave men and died in battle, have been supported by the people until they have come of age; and now fully armed with a hoplite panoply by their fellow-citizens, they are sent out with the prayers of the city, to go each his own way; and they are invited to seats of honour in the theatre.[37]

This ceremony reminded Athenians yet again of their constant obligation to fight for the city.[38]Adulthood for the citizen male is shown here to bring with it a duty to fight for the city, and even these young adults, whose fathers were lost in war, are now ready and prepared to risk their lives for Athens. Furthermore, this parade highlighted for the citizen viewers the honours accorded the war-dead and their families, and thus acted as another invitation for individual Athenians to die finely in battle for the city. Notably, this ceremony, just like tragedy, articulates martial duty with an unambiguous focus on the hoplite. The orphans do not march with oar, oar-loop and cushion - the personal weapons of the rower (e.g. Isokrates 8.48; Thoukydides 2.93.2) - but decked out in the full garb of the heavily armed soldier.

The hoplite was also the central term in the differentiation of society current in the fifth century imaginary. As we have just seen, the parade of orphans presented entry to the phalanx as the sign of male adulthood. The place of Attic women was also defined in relation to this soldier. For example, the women of Aristophanes' comedy *Lysistrata* remain at home while their hoplite husbands campaign abroad (e.g. 105-106), and they are said to bear not simply combatants for the city, but specifically hoplites (587-588). Society's articulation of the *hoplites* seems to have been something that fifth century Athenians took over from the thinking of a small number of residents of archaic Athens. François Lissarrague demonstrates that martial images on archaic Attic pottery presented a social schema centred on the heavily armed soldier.[39] In these images the hoplite arms himself, engages in divination, is on the point of departure or carries home a dead comrade, all the time surrounded by a Scythian archer, an old man, and/or a woman. The woman in these representations symbolises the position and activities of the *oikos* or household to and from which the warrior will return and depart. The old man

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37 I have slightly modified the translation by Adams.

38 Goldhill discusses the ideological import of this ritual very well ((1990) 113).

39 Lissarrague (1990) especially 233-240; and (1989).

is contrasted with the hoplite as he can longer fight and must stay at home. The central and active position of the warrior himself is accentuated by the foreign archer who stands passively outside the group. The different appearance of these two fighters reinforces differences in martial activity, made explicit in actual battle scenes, between the hand to hand combat of the hoplite and the distance fighting of the archer. A shortcoming of the important work of Lissarrague is that it fails to establish which strata of archaic Athenians in fact held the particular conception of society informing these black figure images. Nevertheless, two considerations point to the fact that only a small percentage of the residents of archaic Athens thought exactly in these terms. Firstly, it appears that the painters of fine Attic pottery in general aimed to evoke an upper class point of view, since as I argue in some detail elsewhere, even though poor as well as rich Athenians consumed red figure pottery, the painters of this ware unfailingly replicated in images an elite perspective and experience of quotidian activities.[40] Secondly, if the reasonable assumption is made that only those directly experiencing military ventures would have internalised the hoplite centred social thought evident on these black figure pots, it becomes very telling that the armies of archaic Athens were small affairs of only several hundred troops.[41] The small scale of military undertakings would suggest that only a small fraction of the free male population of Athens would have conceptualised society in these strikingly hoplitic terms. We would seem then to be justified in concluding that the post-Kleisthenic city appropriated such a hoplite centred articulation of society from a small minority of their archaic forebears.

The hoplite was also employed as the paradigm of bravery in the popular thought of the imperial city. This tendency is apparent even in two passages from *Elektra* and *The Suppliant Women* by Euripides which make the atypical suggestion that it is impossible to judge which fighters are valorous in battle. In lines established as authentic by Denniston, Donzelli and Goldhill, Orestes rejects traditional measures of *euandria* or manliness (*Elektra* 373-379).[42] He explains that it is not simply wealth which is a 'base judge' of character, but also battle performance, since in the midst of spears, no one can determine who is brave. Theseus employs very similar words when advising Adrastos not to include accounts of individual bravery in his funerary oration for the Seven Against Thebes (*The Suppliant Women* 850-852, cf. 846-848): '...[v]ain to tell or hear such tales - as if a man in the thick

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40 Pritchard (1999). For a partial summary of the archaeological evidence in favour of non-elite Athenians consuming red figure pots, Pritchard (1998b).

41 For the small and informal nature of the armies of archaic Athens, Frost (1984); van Effenterre (1976) both with primary references.

42 Cropp (1988) 123; Denniston (1939) 94-95; and Goldhill (1986b).

of combat, with a storm of spears before his eyes, ever brought back news of who was brave.'[43] The mention of spears in both these passages indicates that even when arguing that it is impossible to determine who fought bravely in battle, Euripides has not moved beyond a hoplitic frame of reference. This paradigmatic status of the hoplite in discussions of *arete* (gallantry and morality) explains why Perikles in that 'puzzling' chapter of his funeral oration focuses exclusively on the hoplite army and not the navy when trying to prove Athenian martial excellence (Thoukydides 2.39).[44] This bias was due not, as Hornblower suggests, to Thoukydides' 'insouciant, oligarchic tendencies', nor, as Loraux would have it, to the stateman's attempt to present a homogeneous citizen body without military distinctions, but instead was a product of the Athenian inclination to utilise the hoplite as a model in considerations of gallantry.[45] This tendency also accounts for the surprising situation, noted by Stupperich, where images of hoplites, instead of sailors, predominated in the iconography of the public funerary monuments.[46]

Other types of soldiers like archers, sailors and cavalrymen, even though citizens figured in their ranks, were explicitly denigrated relative to the hoplite.[47] For instance, in Euripides' *Herakles*, Lykos, echoing the distinction drawn between archer and hoplite on archaic pottery, argues that the eponymous famed benefactor of humanity was a coward, because '...he never held a shield by his left arm or came near a spear, but with his bow - most cowardly of weapons, he was ready for flight. Yet the bow is not a test of a courageous man, who instead enters his division, waits and beholds the lightening wound of the spear' (159-164, cf. 195-201).[48] Apart from having their bravery questioned, citizen archers also had to content with the opinion that archery was practised only by slaves and barbarians (Sophokles' *Aias* 1013-1014, 1120-1223; and Aristophanes *Acharnians* 704-712). This facility for flight, and not simply a lack of 'personal confrontation' as Winkler and Momigliano suggest, also appears to underlie criticism of ships and sailors.[49] Andromakhe, for example, accuses Menelaos of having often fled like a 'cowardly sailor' when faced with her husband armed 'with a spear' (Euripides *Andromakhe* 456-457; cf. *Rhesos* 53-55, 71-72); and Sophokles

43 Jones' translation, modified.
44 So described by Hornblower (1991) 303.
45 Hornblower (1991) 303 and Loraux (1986a) 331.
46 Stupperich (1994).
47 For a summary of the levels of citizen participation in the different corps of the Athenian military, Pritchard (1995).
48 For other primary references questioning the bravery of archers, Lissarrague (1990) 16-20.
49 Winkler (1990) 179 n.21; Momigliano (1960) 56.

has rowers think instantly of escape by ship as soon as they learn of the dangerous situation into which they and their commander have fallen (*Aias* 245-250). Fifth century Athenians also believed that cavalry service was much safer than fighting as a hoplite (e.g. Plato *Symposium* 221b; Aristophanes *Knights* 1369-1371; Lysias 16.13), and that a decision to fight with the horsemen instead of the hoplites could be a sign of cowardice (e.g. Lysias 14.7, 10-11, 14).[50] Yet rather contradictorily, the Athenian populace also had tremendous pride in their aristocratic cavalry corps, were filled with awe at displays of its horsemanship, and appreciated its defence of Attika in the darkest periods of the Peloponnesian War.[51] Very importantly, this assessment points specifically to the fact that the Athenians were capable of entertaining rather mixed and inconsistent opinions about the same type of citizen fighter.

Despite the decreasing importance of the *hoplites* in the increasingly diverse military of fifth century Athens, the Athenian education system unwittingly assisted in the maintenance of the fighter as the paradigm of valour in the city's imaginary.[52] This support was a consequence of an anachronistic reading of epic warfare. A condition of tragedy's problematisation and reinforcement of civic ideology was that the drama unfolded in a distant epic past. Consequently, as Easterling and Knox argue, playwrights sought to present a view of the age of heroes acceptable to the audience.[53] Tragedy, therefore, portrays the Athenians concept of heroic warfare, and tellingly, it was imagined in very contemporary terms. Leaders like Menelaos and Agamemnon as well as their troops, are presented as and are explicitly called *hoplitai*.[54] The Iliadic heroes of Homer, furthermore, are transformed into classical commanders (e.g. Aiskhylos *Seven Against Thebes* 42; Euripides *The Suppliant Women* 102, 131). Finally, the pitched battles of the tragic stage are no more than hoplite engagements with epic glosses. For example, the dramatisation by Euripides of the battle between the Athenians and the Thebans over the recovery of the bodies of the Seven Against Thebes, consists of a long hoplite engagement flanked by a quaint charge of chariots and the momentary reversion of Theseus to his mythic persona when he intervenes, as heroes are wont to do, outside of the phalanx, and armed with a

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50 The Aristophanic reference should be read with Sommerstein (1981) 217-218.

51 The treatment of the cavalry by the *demos* is discussed at length by Spence (1993) 180-230 with primary references.

52 The changing military scene is outlined by Vidal-Naquet (1968).

53 Easterling (1985); Knox (1979).

54 e.g. Aiskhylos *Seven Against Thebes* 466-467; Euripides *Herakleidai* 694, 800; *Andromakhe* 458-459; *Phoinician Women* 999-1005, 1096; and *Orestes* 652-653.

club (*The Suppliant Women* 650-730; cf. *Herakleidai* 799-866).[55] Fifth century Athenians, it seems, thought epic characters were in the main hoplites. Yet these figures, as Marrou and Girard show, were employed as well in the classrooms and homes of fifth century Athens as examples of interpersonal and martial behaviour.[56] Therefore, the middling and wealthy young Athenians attending the classes of the grammar teacher would have been trained to think of gallantry and martial duty in terms of the figure of the hoplite long before they were old enough to hear speeches at the Pnyx or plays in the theatre of Dionysos. Moreover, hoplite citizens gained prestige and validity from the belief that the heroes of epic themselves had fought as heavy infantry men.

Classical Athenian funeral orations also reinforced the idea that the Athenian land troops of the age of the heroes had fought as hoplites. *Epitaphioi* habitually justified the reputation of the Athenians for martial success, justice, protection of the weak and hegemony by narrating three ancient exploits of the Athenians - the expulsion of the Amazons from Attica, the recovery of the bodies of the Seven Against Thebes, and the protection of the children of Herakles (Lysias 2.4-16; and Plato *Menexenos* 239b). Although these funerary speeches never recount details of the actual battles, representations of these deeds in tragedy, as we have seen in Euripides' *The Suppliant Women*, and on the murals and friezes of civic buildings indicate that the citizens of Athens imagined that they were hoplitic engagements. In consequence the hoplites of fifth century Athens gained further prestige and legitimation from the fact that they could point to mythological forebears not only in the Trojan War but also in the battles of their own city in the heroic age.

The hoplite also figured prominently in a fundamental pillar of citizen self-definition in fifth century Athens - the polarity between Greek and barbarian. This is apparent in a play normally cited for its naval content. Aiskhylos in *The Persians* structures his dramatisation of the difference between Hellene and barbarian in a series of dichotomies - isonomy versus tyranny, freedom versus slavery, moderation versus luxury, self-control versus emotionalism and insolence, order versus disorder, and bravery versus cowardice.[57] Although each is shown to include a broad range of troop types, this tragedy repeatedly makes overarching characterisations of the Persians as archers and of the Greeks (read Athenians) as hoplites. Throughout this play the leaders

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55 For the lack of chariots in classical warfare, Detienne (1968). For the appearances of heroes in contemporary battles, Bowden (1993).

56 For discussions of Athenian education, Beck (196r); Girard (1891); Marrou (1956) 1-43.

57 Hall (1989) 56-100.

of the Medes are called 'men subduing with the bow' (26, 926) and the King himself is described as *toxarchos* or leader of archers (556); the Persian force is symbolised by the bow (85, 278-279) whereas as the Greek armament is represented by the spear (147-148); and at one point when the Queen asks whether the Athenians fight with the bow in hand, the chorus retorts that they fight with 'upright spears and shields' (237-238). This characterisation underscores the idea that the Greeks were valorous and the Persians cowardly as it was well established that hoplites were the paradigm of gallantry and archers amongst the most cowardly of fighters.

Even this cursory consideration of the military thinking of the fifth century Athenian public should establish beyond doubt that the heavily armed soldier enjoyed a normative and predominant position culturally. His equipment and battle experience were constantly introduced in generic discussions of warfare. The frequent reminders of a citizen's martial duty were typically couched in hoplitic terms. Even more significantly, considerations of gallantry and cowardliness always made reference to this type of soldier's mode of combat, and the city's archers, cavalrymen and, occasionally even sailors, were judged by Athenians at large not to meet the hoplitic standard of bravery. The hoplite was also utilised in popular thought as the pivotal reference point for the articulation of age and gender distinctions within Athenian society, and for the marking out of some important differences between Greeks and barbarians. Somewhat incongruously, the heavily armed soldier happened to retain this centrality and prominence in the Athenian imaginary in spite of the fact that he was marginalised militarily by the city's ever deepening naval preoccupations. The main reason for the cultural steadfastness of the hoplite stemmed from the remarkable number of important roles played by this figure in the imaginary. To marginalise him ideologically would have required nothing less than extensive reworkings of several fundamental pillars of Athenian self-identity. Such a reformation was too difficult to achieve. Another major explanation for the imaginary longevity of this warrior was that classical Athenians had inherited a hoplitic centred way of thinking from archaic forebears. Consequently, this manner of thought had become entrenched by the time of post-Persian Wars ascendancy of the navy, and had the added advantage of appearing traditional in a society which put great store in the upholding of ancestral customs. The last major reason for this asymmetry between civic ideology and martial reality was a combined result of the Athenian public's belief that the warriors of Homer were armed and fought as hoplites and of their employment of these heroes as paradigms of morality. Together these factors underpinned the position of the contemporary heavily armed soldier in two ways. Hoplites gained the prestige of being the direct descendants of the venerated fighters of epic

poetry. And the normative usage of the heavily armed soldier in reflections on valour and martial duty in popular thinking was bolstered by the possession of an auspicious parallel in the Homeric hero who was thought also to be a hoplite and employed as a model of morality in the classrooms and homes of fifth century Athens.

Sailors

In spite of this continuing centrality of the heavily armed soldier in popular thinking the burgeoning naval pursuits of fifth century Athens were in no way ignored culturally.[58] Extant comedies, tragedies, and funeral orations reveal instead that the Athenian imaginary responded to these marine developments diversely and prodigiously.[59] One of the most conspicuous features of the comic and tragic poetry of fifth century Athens is that by far its largest class of imagery is drawn from the world of maritime affairs. The city's playwrights did not restrict themselves to the limited number of nautical metaphors coined by epic and archaic poets, but very frequently invented and introduced into their plays new maritime figures of speech, stretching from the most straightforward (e.g. Aiskhylos *Agamemnon* 897, 900; Aristophanes *Birds* 1154-1158) to the most complicated (e.g. Sophokles *Aias* 1142-1146; Aristophanes *Akharnians* 541-544), and based at times on detailed features of the triremes and administration of the contemporary Athenian navy (e.g. Aristophanes *Peace* 1226-1232).[60] This manifest eagerness of Athenian tragedians and comedians both to introduce a wide range and a great quantity of nautical imagery into their productions strongly suggests that the Athenian public had the detailed general knowledge and favourable judgement of nautical activities necessary for these figures of speech to be intelligible and acceptable. Importantly, fifth century Athenian sailors did not have to be content with the rather oblique reflection and acknowledgement of their maritime experiences furnished by such nautical imagery as most of the extant tragedies, as it happens, make some sort of mention of sea travel. It must be admitted though that a reasonable number of

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58 Since the discussion of my findings on the naval strands of 'the Athenian imaginary' in the following paragraphs is compressed and partial, the interested reader is advised to consult the relevant section of my dissertation.

59 *Pace* the current *communis opinio* which maintains that the public culture of classical Athens was overwhelmingly hoplitic and paid scant regard to the navy and its personnel (e.g. Hanson (1996) 305-306; Pritchard (1998a); Raaflaub (1994) 138-139; (1996) 157-159; Spence (1993) 164-173; Strauss (1996) 313-314, 320, 321-322).

60 Most considerations of the nautical imagery of classical Athenian literature have been confined to single tragedies (e.g. Blaiklock (1955); Campbell (1986); Kirkwood (1969); Tarkow (1970). An exception is Dumortier ((1935) 27-55) who studies the nautical imagery of the extant works of Aiskhylos and Pindar.

these direct references to nautical affairs are located in plays which otherwise have little or nothing to do with the sea (e.g. Aiskhylos *The Suppliant Women* 713-723; Euripides *Elektra* 1238-1359). Nevertheless, the trials and tribulations of ship voyages were treated in far greater detail whenever the tragedians chose to dramatise the well established myths about the ill fated sea journeys of the Trojan expedition (e.g. Aiskhylos *Agamemnon*; Euripides *Trojan Women*; *Hekabe*; *Iphigeneia at Aulis*). Moreover, these poets even invented and dramatised new mythical stories in which warships and sailing played large parts (e.g. Sophokles *Philoktetes*; Euripides *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*). These direct treatments of maritime affairs in tragedy provide another indication of how the masses of Athenian citizens judged seamanship. It seems most unlikely that tragedians would have persisted with making references to or dramatising the adventures of sea journeys if most of their audience viewed such pursuits negatively. On the contrary, this aspect of the genre points to a positive assessment of, and keen interest in, seamanship on the part of the fifth century Athenian public. It is also highly significant that the tragic poets modelled their depictions of the nautical undertakings of the age of the heroes almost entirely on contemporary Athenian warships and seaborne expeditions. This anachronism helped to elevate the status of fifth century Athenian sailors as the drawing of parallels between the contemporary world and the esteemed heroic age was a traditional procedure by which a newly emerging phenomena or group of people gained legitimation and praise in ancient Greece.[61] In other words, the retrojection by tragedy of naval realities of fifth century Athens into the age of the heroes actually justified and glorified the increasingly briny pursuits of contemporary Athens.

The marked intensification of Athenian interest in naval affairs after the second Persian Wars coincided with the elaboration and rise to prominence of the mythical story of Theseus' dive into the sea which endowed this most important Attic hero with superhuman, maritime skills as the son of the sea god Poseidon (e.g. Bakkhylides 17; Euripides *Hippolytos* 887, 1169-1170; Sophokles *Oidipous at Kolonos* 707-719).[62] When it is appreciated that one of the chief functions of Theseus in the late sixth and fifth centuries was to mirror the evolving self-identity of the Athenian civic community, the superlative nautical skills accorded to him in this myth can be seen to be very important,[63] since they point firmly to the fact that from the second quarter of

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61 This function of mythology is noted by Buxton (1994) 195; Connor (1970) 152, 165, 170; Mills (1997) 35.

62 For a discussion of this myth and especially its evocation on Attic red figure pots, Shapiro (1992) 39-49; (1994) 117-123.

63 For valuable discussions of the cultural functions of Theseus, Connor (1970); Calame (1990); Garland (1992) 82-98; Mills (1997); Walker (1995).

the fifth century the masses of Athenian citizens believed that they possessed an unusually high level of seafaring skills.

This maritime aspect of Athenian self-identity is not evident in the marine characterisation of Theseus alone as the plays of Aristophanes frequently imply that the citizens of late fifth century Athens knew themselves to be a naval superpower and responded to martial provocation accordingly (e.g. *Birds* 108, 145-147; *Akharnians* 190, 544-554; *Lysistrata* 173-174). Moreover, as Aristophanic comedy so obviously parodied the cliques and polemic of political and legal debate in Athens, the many accusations and proposed improvements concerning the navy to be made by the politicians and sycophants of the comic stage indicate that leaders as well as their audiences were constantly concerned with the maintenance of the city's dominance of the Aegean (e.g. *Knights* 1063-1064, 1181-1182, 1184-1186, 1300-1315, 1350-1353; *Lysistrata* 420-423).[64] Aristophanes also makes, incidentally, abstract points about the necessary infrastructure for seapower which tend to suggest that the masses of late fifth century Athens were capable of strategic thinking with respect to naval forces that is otherwise attested only in the oratory of the next century (e.g. *Birds* 378-380, 1537-1541).[65] Old comedy also reveals once again the Athenian public's positive assessment of seamanship as well as its high esteem for personnel of its navy. For example, Aristophanes repeatedly characterises sailors as *khrestoi politai* or useful and good citizens (e.g. *Akharnians* 677-678; *Knights* 545-610; *Frogs* 687-705); calls the oarsmen of a trireme 'saviours of the city' (*Akharnians* 161-163); and maintains that the Persians were defeated and the Athenian empire acquired through the many toils of hoplites *and* sailors (e.g. *Wasps* 678-679, 682-685).

Yet in spite of such high praise it is true that the heavily armed soldier was the only figure evoked positively in considerations of martial duty and performance, and that popular literature occasionally even implied that sailors might be cowardly. But remarkably and in direct contradiction of these features of the imaginary, the citizens of classical Athens apparently believed as well that sailors could be valorous as tragedy hymned the gallantry of the combatants of Salamis (Aiskhylos *The Persians*) and the funeral oration of the fifth and fourth centuries brought forward historical naval battles as examples of the innate *arete* of the Athenians (e.g. Lysias 2.27-43, 48-53; Plato *Menexenos* 240e-241e, 242c-243d).

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64 This skeuomorphic penchant of Old Comedy is observed as well by Cartledge (1990) 49; Henderson (1990) 273, 312; Loraux (1986a) 304, 309.

65 For strategic thinking on seapower in fourth century oratory, Ober (1978).

Conclusion

Military thought in fifth century Athens was a potpourri of traditional hoplitic and newfangled naval material. The Athenians did not challenge the centrality and prominence of the hoplite in popular thought as he became an increasingly marginal figure militarily. Instead they simply added new imaginary capital about citizen sailors and their glorious fleet. While this babble contributed to the political cohesion of the imperial city, as both sailors and hoplites received acknowledgment, justification and praise, it also contained ideas that sat uncomfortably with each other or were even directly contradictory. Thus with respect to popular thinking on military matters in fifth century Athens it is fitting to speak once again of the 'fractured imaginary'.

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